

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Futures Unlimited

Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center

Futures Unlimited Positions Itself for ISO Certification

Client Profile:

Futures Unlimited employs persons with disabilities to provide contracted light manufacturing, assembly, and kitting services for local companies. Futures employs 75 people at its facility in Pontiac, Illinois.

Situation:

Futures Unlimited faced a dilemma -- spend the time and money to achieve ISO certification or risk losing its largest customer and be forced to lay off employees. Implementing a Quality Management System through ISO certification would enable Futures Unlimited to meet its main customer's demanding requirements for product quality, cost and delivery. It would also provide a distinct marketing advantage and an opportunity to diversify the company's services. Company management called upon the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center (IMEC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

IMEC consultants met with Futures Unlimited leaders to provide an overview of the ISO 9001:2000 standard, then helped the company develop a plan for implementation and prepare for its initial certification audit. IMEC also worked with Futures Unlimited staff to refine the company's quality manual, procedures and work instructions and conducted training to enable internal auditors to monitor and report on the effectiveness of the Quality Management System. "Gretchen Clifton walked us through the whole process," said Beth Dunahee, Futures' Director of Business Operations. "She provided all the resources and did all the legwork. She was so supportive and positive, we couldn't have done it without her." Dunahee continued, "I think we would have paid more and received less value from another provider."

Results:

Projected:

- * ISO 9001:2000 certification.
- * Increased sales of \$500,000.
- * Retain 40 jobs.

Testimonial:

"IMEC really worked to understand what our business is all about. They helped make us better and solidify our relationships with our customers."

Beth Dunahee, Director of Business Operations